



## **Asian Journal of Agricultural Extension, Economics & Sociology**

19(1): 1-7, 2017; Article no.AJAEES.34479  
ISSN: 2320-7027

# **Effect of Social – Support on Peer-relationship among Adolescents in Haryana**

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### **Authors' contributions**

*This work was carried out in collaboration between all authors. Author RC performed the statistical analysis, managed the literature searches and wrote the first draft of the manuscript. Authors SP and SS designed the study and supervised the analyses of the study. All authors read and approved the final manuscript.*

### **Article Information**

DOI: 10.9734/AJAEES/2017/34479

#### Editor(s):

(1) Mahgoub El-Tigani Mahmoud, Department of Sociology, College of Liberal Arts, Tennessee State University, USA.

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Complete Peer review History: <http://www.sciencedomain.org/review-history/20427>

**Original Research Article**

**Received 29<sup>th</sup> May 2017**  
**Accepted 27<sup>th</sup> July 2017**  
**Published 9<sup>th</sup> August 2017**

## **ABSTRACT**

**Aim:** To verify the relationship between social-support and peer-relationship among adolescents in Haryana.

**Study Design:** A cross – sectional study was conducted on 460 adolescents of 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> standard in Haryana.

**Place and Duration of Study:** The study was conducted in Haryana, between July 2013 and December 2013.

**Methodology:** Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) and Peer – Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) were used to assess the social – support and peer – relationship among adolescents respectively.

**Results:** Female adolescents (53%) received more social – support in terms of quantity (SSQN) and were more satisfied than their counterparts i.e., male adolescents (41%). Adolescents who were victimized at low level reported better social – support (M = 8.99). Results further exposed that social – support quantity increases, the pro – social behavior ( $r = 0.09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) within peers during

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adolescence also increases. Social – support from family members increases, the victimization ( $r = -0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) decreases and as social – support from non – family members' increases, chances of victimization ( $r = 0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) also increases.

**Conclusion:** If adolescents do not get social – support at the time they need either from family members or non – family members, they will become victim earlier.

*Keywords: Adolescents; peer – relationship; pro – social behavior; social – support quantity (SSQN); social - support satisfaction (SSQS); victimization.*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Social support is a range of interpersonal relationships that have an impact on the individual's functioning and generally includes support satisfaction. An individual's social support system includes peers, friends, and family members, but the most important social support sources are family, peers, and teachers. The adolescent attempts to create a balance between his/her ideas and his/her family's and society's ideas. Therefore, adolescence is an important period that must be understood by both the family and society. During adolescence, the feeling of belonging is quite significant and a significantly increased amount of time is spent outside of the family with friends, which, in turn, is an important transitional step for socialization. Social support has received considerable attention in child and adolescent literature.

A small group of similarly aged, fairly close friends and sharing the same activities is known as peer – group. As the children enter adolescence, the quality of peer – relationship start to change. The adolescents start to identify themselves with small gang and get involved in bullying and victimization. Nearly one fourth of the students were victims of bullying. Physical bullying was reported by 8%, relational bullying by 12%, and 4% reported being victims of both physical and relational bullying [1]. Boys reported more direct victimization while girls were more likely to be victims of relational bullying. Adolescents' development depends on the perceived competence and the ex'perience of social support from family, peers and others [2]. Parental involvement in the lives of adolescent and children also facilitates young people to cope with stressors and to maintain physical and mental health. For adolescents to solve problems concerning their peers and family, adapt to their environment and keep themselves psychologically well, social support is important.

## 1.1 Objectives

- To find out the extent of social – support status among adolescents in Haryana.
- To find out the effect of social – support on peer-relationship among adolescents.

## 2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

The study was conducted in Hisar district of Haryana state. The study was planned on two groups of adolescents, one having transition from school to university atmosphere and another continuing their 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup> in the same school atmosphere and falling in the age group 16 – 17 years. To draw the urban sample, two colleges *i.e.*, I.C. College of Home Sciences and College of Agriculture, C.C.S. Haryana Agricultural University, Hisar were purposively selected as these institutions admit children after 10<sup>th</sup> class. To draw the rural sample, three villages namely Neoli Kala, Behbalpur and Mangali were randomly selected having schools admitting both girls and boys. Researcher contacted the principal and class teachers and they took the written consent of the students, only those who consented to participate were selected. In total 348 adolescents from rural and 112 adolescents from urban area constituted the sample for present study.

### 2.1 Tools and Instrument

#### 2.1.1 Social support questionnaire

Social Support Questionnaire (SSQ) [3] was used to assess the social – support perceived by adolescents. It consists of six statements for calculating number of people (1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, 7<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>) from which adolescents perceive social – support and six items for calculating degree of satisfaction (2<sup>nd</sup>, 4<sup>th</sup>, 6<sup>th</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>). Adolescent write the relation with them from which they perceive social – support and adolescent's degree of satisfaction rated on a six point scale: 1= very satisfied, 2= fairly satisfied,

3= a little dissatisfied, 4= a little satisfied, 5= fairly satisfied and 6= very satisfied.

### **2.1.2 Scoring procedure**

As per the SSQ administration manual following scoring procedure was adopted. First count the total number of people for each of the odd – numbered items. Add the totals together (Max. =54). Divide by 6 for per item SSQ Number score, or SSQN. Add the total satisfaction scores for the 6 even numbered items (Max. = 36). Divide by 6 for per item SSQ Satisfaction score or SSQS. Family score and non – family score was computed by using the method of SSQN for all people described as family members, or not described as family members respectively.

### **2.1.3 Peer – relationship questionnaire**

Peer – Relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) [4] was used to assess the peer – relationship. PRQ comprised of 20 statements having 3 sub – scales i.e., bully scale comprising of six statements i.e., 4<sup>th</sup>, 9<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 14<sup>th</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup>, victim scale having five statements i.e., 3<sup>rd</sup>, 8<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>, 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> and pro – social scale contained a total of 4 statements i.e., 5<sup>th</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup>.

### **2.1.4 Scoring procedure**

As per the PRQ administration manual following scoring procedure was adopted. The scoring of the scale was done on the basis of four point scale: Never – 1, Once in a while – 2, Pretty often – 3, Very often – 4. Adolescents were required to select one answer for each item. All the responses of Peer - relationship Questionnaire (PRQ) were scored and calculated, the sum of these items was the total raw score and the achievable scores ranged 1 – 4 on each item.

## **2.2 Data Analysis**

As per the objectives of the study, all students who consented to participate from the age group 16 – 17 years were included in the study. SPSS Programme was run to analyze the data. Independent sample t- test, One – Way ANOVA and correlation was used to examine the effect of social – support on peer – relationship of adolescents.

## **3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **3.1 Social – Support Status of Adolescents across Gender**

Gender wise distribution of social – support status among adolescents has been shown in Table 1. A higher percentage of female adolescents reported good number of social – support (53.80%) as compared to male adolescents (41%). Table also point out that females (53.80%) got more social – support as compared to males (41%). The reason for female contributing to the highest level of seeking support and satisfaction may be that girls are emotionally very weak and share their problems and stressors openly with other people in their families and outside families, whereas, boys from the very beginning are taught to be strong headed, hence controlling their fears and stressors. So, the socialization process from the very beginning differs for both males and females leading to support for females than their counterparts. The results get strength from the results who reported that female adolescents perceived more social support and were more satisfied in comparison to male adolescents [5]. The studies that have results to explain these gender differences are in line with one another study which also revealed that female students have a higher satisfaction level as compared to male students due to higher levels of perceived social support from family, friends and other members of the society [6].

### **3.2 Comparison of Social – Support of Adolescents across Peer – Relationship**

Table 2 highlight the results related to comparison of social – support among adolescents against peer – relationship using Duncan multiple difference comparison test. Significant differences were observed in social – support quantity ( $F_{(3,456)} = 1.98$ ) and social – support satisfaction ( $F_{(3,456)} = 3.27$ ) at 0.05 level of significance on the basis of victimization. Mean scores depicted that adolescents who were victimized at low level reported to received better social – support quantity ( $M = 8.99$ ) and the adolescents who were victimized at moderate level were more satisfied with the received social – support. The reason behind this may be that if they get social-support at the time they need, adolescents can communicate or share their

problem easily with them. This will make the chances of being victimized less and also satisfy the adolescents with the perceived social-support. The results are in line with the study [7] which also revealed that the adolescents who perceived social-support when required, they reported less victimization.

### 3.3 Correlation between Social - Support and Peer - Relationship among Adolescents

Results related to correlations between social - support and peer - relationship among adolescents is displayed in Table 3. Pearson correlation analysis divulged positive and significant co relational values between social - support quantity and pro - social behavior ( $r = 0.09$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ) whereas social - support from family members is negatively as well as significantly correlated with victimization ( $r = -0.12$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Moving towards relationship between non - family members' social - support and victimization from peers, results revealed significant as well as positive correlation ( $r = 0.10$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Results exposed that as social - support quantity increases, the pro - social behavior within peers during adolescence also increases. This speaks about the rich traditional values of Indian culture, especially in rural areas as the maximum respondents of the present study were from rural area. In rural areas still we have closely knitted emotional ties as majority of the families are medium sized. Living together requires pro - social skills for survival. Ecological theory [8] proposed that adolescent development occurs in realms of family, peer support and the school. Risk factors associated with bullying and

peer victimization in school within the context of Bronfenbrenner's ecological framework i.e., within the context of micro (parent - youth relationships, interparental violence, relations with peers, school connectedness and school environment), meso (teacher involvement), exo (exposure to media violence, neighborhood environment), macro (cultural norms and beliefs, religious affiliation) and chronosystem (changes in family structure) levels [9].

Results revealed that as social - support from family members increases, the victimization decreases and as social - support from non - family members' increases, chances of victimization also increases. During adolescence, the feeling of belonging is quite significant and a significantly increased amount of time is spent outside of the family with friends, which, in turn, is an important transitional step for socialization. Those who trust their families and have strong relationships with them have been observed to maintain good relationships with their peers as well [10]. For adolescents to solve problems concerning their peers and family, adapt to their environment, and keep themselves psychologically well, social support is important. Positive parent-child relations, extended family support, social support networks, religiosity, neighborhood and school quality appear to be particularly important for overall development [11]. Social support such as advice and encouragement increase the probability for students to become more prone play an active role in handling stress and problem solving, thus leading to high levels of satisfaction among adolescents [12].

Table 1. Social - support status of adolescents across gender

S. no.	Gender	Male (n=184)	Female (n=276)	Total (n=460)
	Social - support			
1	<b>Social - support questionnaire number (SSQN) (Mean)</b>	5.84±2.42	6.52±2.23	6.25±2.26
	<b>Quantity of social - support</b>			
	Poor (6 - 22)	36 (19.70)	36 (13.00)	72 (15.70)
	Average (23 - 38)	72 (39.30)	92 (33.20)	164 (35.60)
2	Good (39 - 54)	75 (41.00)	149 (53.80)	224 (48.70)
	<b>Social - support questionnaire satisfaction (SSQS) (Mean)</b>	5.71±0.69	5.80±0.52	5.77±0.59
	<b>Quality of social - support</b>			
	Poor (13- 21)	05 (02.70)	05 (01.80)	10 (02.20)
Average (22 - 29)	08 (04.40)	07 (02.50)	15 (03.30)	
Good (30 - 36)	170 (92.90)	265 (95.70)	435 (94.50)	

Note: Figures in parentheses indicate percentages

Table 2. Comparison of social – support of adolescents across peer – relationship

S. no.		Peer – relationship			
1		<b>Bullying</b>			<b>F value</b>
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
		<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	
		08.11±02.94 <sup>a</sup>	07.51±02.70 <sup>a</sup>	07.58±02.36 <sup>a</sup>	1.77
2	Social – support quantity	<b>Victimization</b>			
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
		<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	
		08.99±03.36 <sup>b</sup>	08.46±02.53 <sup>ab</sup>	08.25±02.50 <sup>a</sup>	1.98*
3		<b>Pro – social behavior</b>			
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
		<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	
		14.13±02.26 <sup>a</sup>	14.24±02.50 <sup>a</sup>	14.58±02.19 <sup>a</sup>	1.55
4		<b>Bullying</b>			
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
		<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	
		07.80±01.32 <sup>a</sup>	08.40±02.50 <sup>a</sup>	07.60±02.38 <sup>a</sup>	0.84
5	Social – support satisfaction	<b>Victimization</b>			
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
		<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	
		06.70±02.06 <sup>a</sup>	09.47±02.80 <sup>b</sup>	08.45±02.66 <sup>ab</sup>	3.27*
6		<b>Pro – social behavior</b>			
		<b>Low</b>	<b>Moderate</b>	<b>High</b>	
		<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	<b>Mean±SD</b>	
		14.30±02.79 <sup>a</sup>	13.67±02.64 <sup>a</sup>	14.42±02.30 <sup>a</sup>	0.76

\*Significant at 5% level

Note: Means in the same row that do not share superscripts differ at  $p < 0.05$  using Duncan multiple difference comparison

Table 3. Correlation between social - support and peer - relationship among adolescents

S. no.	Peer –relationship	Bullying	Victimization	Pro – social behavior
	<b>Social – support</b>			
1	Social – support quantity (SSQN)	-0.06	-0.07	0.09*
2	Social – support satisfaction (SSQS)	-0.04	0.01	0.05
3	Social – support from family members	-0.09	-0.12*	0.06
4	Social - support from non – family members	0.07	0.10*	0.07

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

#### 4. IMPLICATIONS

- Adolescents should be asked if they are involved in bullying either as a victim or as a bully.
- Family support was found to be negatively associated with adolescents' victimization; therefore, communication gap between family members should be taken care which we generally do not notice in our day to day lives.
- Proper clinical examination of those adolescents who had reported moderate/high bullying and victimization is required for planning intervention for them.

## 5. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

1. The present findings are based on Indian adolescents of Haryana state; there is a need to replicate the findings in different regions having different cultural contexts to have generalized findings.
2. The current study was conducted at a single time point.
3. A longitudinal study across different developmental periods would add to our understanding of change and stability in the area of social – support and peer - relationship among adolescents.

## 6. CONCLUSION

- Female adolescents received good social – support from family members as well as non – family members like friends, neighbors, teachers etc. than their counterparts i.e., male adolescents.
- Adolescents who were victimized at low level reported better social – support quantity and the adolescents who were victimized at moderate level were more satisfied with the received social – support.
- Social – support quantity increases, the pro – social behavior within peers during adolescence also increases.
- Social – support from family members increases, the victimization decreases and as social – support from non – family members' increases, chances of victimization also increases.

## CONSENT

As per international standard or university standard written consent has been collected and preserved by the authors.

## COMPETING INTERESTS

Authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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